**OMAM: Background research topics**

*“Of Mice and Men” was written by John Steinbeck in 1937. In order to understand the issues and themes of the book, it is important first to look at the major events and the nature of American society at the time, which would have influenced Steinbeck.*

*In groups, you need to produce a 10 minute presentation of your assigned topic, along with a poster. All members of the group will need to be familiar with all of the presentation, as you will each need to present to small groups in a “gallery walk”.*

*Below are all the research topics, along with some initial questions to guide you in your research.*

1. John Steinbeck
   1. Who is John Steinbeck?
   2. Where is he from? How did his experiences influence his writing?
   3. What else did he write? What are the key themes of his writing/his beliefs?
2. The American Dream
   1. What is the American Dream? How does it affect ordinary people?
   2. How was the American Dream viewed in 1920s/1930s? How was it affected by the events of 1920s/1930s?
3. The Roaring Twenties & the Wall Street Crash
   1. What changes occurred in American society during 1920s? Why was this period called the “roaring” twenties? Did it affect all aspects of society equally?
   2. What was the Wall Street Crash? What were the effects of it?
4. The Dustbowl and Migrant Workers
   1. What was the Dustbowl?
   2. Why did it create migrant workers? What kind of life did migrant workers have?
5. Racism (Civil War to 1930s)
   1. What had changed for African Americans since the American Civil War? Were these changes recognised by everyone?
   2. What place did African Americans hold in society? What problems did they face?
6. Women in 1920s and 1930s America
   1. What were women’s lives like in this period? What position did they hold in society?
   2. How had women’s role in society changed? What problems did they still face?